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NOTE ON THE ENVOY OF *TRUTH*

Miss Rickert's discovery—the validity of which is hardly open to question—incidentally disposes of two problems connected with the Envoy of this poem.

Several scholars have expressed doubts of its authorship, as it is contained in only one MS (see references in Miss Hammond's *Manual*). But Chaucer's relations to Vache were such as to make his authorship highly probable; and the Envoy is closely bound to the poem by "beste" (l. 18), which obviously is not due to a vague suggestion from Boethius (see Skeat's note), but is a definite anticipation of "Vache" of the Envoy.

Shirley calls the poem a "Balade that Chaucier made on his deethbedde." This statement has long been recognized as improbable. That Shirley knew little about the poem is indicated by the absence of the Envoy from the two copies made by him. The improbability of a death-bed composition is perhaps increased by the presence of the pun on Vache's name.

Is there any instance in which information given by Shirley has, when tested, proved to be correct? It may fairly be doubted, I think, whether he possessed any information not derived from the poems or any authoritative traditions.

JOHN M. MANLY

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO